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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: ALMATY NOTES, JULY 2007

**¶11.** The "Almaty Notes" series is intended to maintain focus on developments in civil society, the media, and the opposition in Kazakhstan's "southern capital" following the move of the Embassy to Astana.

Government Reshuffle Expected after Elections

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**¶12.** An Almaty political analyst, Andrey Chebotaryev, predicts a government reshuffle after the Mazhilis (Parliament) elections. According to Mr. Chebotaryev, Prime Minister Masimov may announce the resignation of the government or the president himself may initiate a reshuffle. Masimov would likely be reinstated in his position. The candidates for resignation are Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Aslan Musin, Minister of Culture and Information Yermukhamet Yertysbayev, Minister of Labor and Social Protection Gulzhana Karagusova and Minister of Justice Zagipa Baliyeva. They have been placed on the party list of Nur Otan to take party seats in the Mazhilis. There are various reasons for the expected moves; for example Aslan Musin has made slow progress on administrative reform, Yetysbayev has been involved in conflicts with mass media and journalists and Karagusova has been blamed for poor social protection of some categories of Kazakhstanis and for failure to fight poverty and unemployment. The other candidates for resignation are the Interior Minister, Baurzhan Mukhamedzhanov, and some oblast akims.

Nationalists demand Aliyev's Extradition

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**¶13.** A group of representatives of the "Zheltoksan" nationalist movement picketed the consulate of Austria in Almaty on July 20 demanding that Austria extradite Rakhat Aliyev. The protesters handed over their demand in writing to a representative of the consulate. (Interfax, July 20)

Hunger Strikes against Demolition

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**¶14.** Six residents of an apartment building on Seyfullin Street in Almaty went on hunger strike in protest against the planned demolition of the building. According to the protesters, the compensation they have been offered is too low to buy apartments in the central districts of the city. The conflict has lasted for a year. A construction company, which wants to build a hotel on the site, has bought all but three of the apartments. (Vremya daily, July 19)

**¶15.** In the settlement of Karasu, located on the outskirts of Almaty City, on July 23 ten local residents announced a hunger strike in protest against the demolition of their houses. On July 6 this year

the city court in Almaty approved a plan to demolish 13 illegal houses in this settlement. According to Dametken Alenova, who is defending the owners of these houses, all 13 owners have permits signed in 1998 by the former akim of the Zhetysu district. However, the current deputy akim of the district asserts the lands have not been legalized and the residents began to seize these lands only last year. (www.kub.kz, July 27, 2007)

#### Almaty Police Fighting Drug Trafficking

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¶6. In the past six months the police in Almaty have seized 170 kilos of illegal narcotics, the press service of the city police reported on July 19. Since the beginning of the year the city police have conducted five operations and closed down several drug delivery channels. Seven thousand drug addicts, most of them minors, are registered with the city drug addict treatment center. (Liter daily, July 20)

#### Illegal Migrants in Almaty

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¶7. For the first half of this year the migration police in Almaty reported 15,000 illegal migrants, mostly from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia. According to the law, illegal migrants should be deported and the migration police should impose a ban on their travel to Kazakhstan for five years. According to the Almaty Migration Police, illegal migration to Kazakhstan, including Almaty, is rising. (Liter daily, July 24)

MILAS